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# Inman Denies He's Quitting CIA Post in Dispute on Policy

By ROBERT C. TOTH, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Adm. Bobby R. Inman Thursday dismissed as "absolutely not true" reports that policy disputes with the Reagan Administration had caused him to quit as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He declared that he is resigning to seek "fresh challenges."

"I'm not leaving angry," he told The Times. "Those stories about a big policy clash causing me to leave are just not true. There've been a lot of little bureaucratic squabbles over the years, peripheral to any job, and what little tolerance I've had for those things has disappeared."

"I'm not a good deputy," he added. "I like running my own shop. And money plays a role here. (With one son in college and another in private school), we've been selling bonds to pay tuition and my net worth is less now than when I took the job."

"Policy fights would not have necessarily caused me to quit anyway," he said in a telephone interview. "It would have been over a matter of principle, such as unfettered electronic surveillance of Americans."

## Cast as Influential Moderate

Doubts that Inman is being totally frank in denying that a policy fight was behind his resignation persist largely because he has been cast as the most influential moderate—if not liberal—voice in an intelligence community supervised by conservatives of the Reagan Administration.

Last year Inman successfully opposed attempts to loosen constraints on counter-intelligence actions in the United States by the CIA and FBI—or to "unleash" the agencies, as some called it. After a public clash, the guidelines for such intelligence collection more closely followed the previous Carter Administration's regulations than Reagan officials wanted, particularly on electronic eavesdropping. The new rules do permit some CIA activities in the United States for the first time, however.

Most recently, a plan suggested within the National Security Council staff to bring together the counter-intelligence functions of the CIA and FBI into a single operation has been opposed by Inman as well as by other top intelligence officials, according to congressional sources.

A Senate source said Inman "won that battle since that plan is dead." A House Intelligence Committee source said Inman "was winning the battle, although I'm not sure the plan is dead. But I don't think he's the kind to leave if he was losing."

## Intense Bureaucratic In-Fighting

Other sources said this dispute centered on the scope of a study of counterintelligence activities that was the idea of conservative NSC staff member Kenneth de Graffenreid. In the end, the study was focused narrowly on intelligence threats from foreign governments, as

Inman, CIA chief William J. Casey. Inman H. Webster wanted, the source said, the central control of counterintelligence. Efforts to reach De Graffenreid were unsuccessful.

Intense bureaucratic in-fighting over the study went on during March, according to one report. Inman's letter of resignation was dated March 22, and the timing suggested to some that the issue had prompted Inman to quit.

Inman denied that that was true, but he refused to discuss the issue for publication because, he said, "counterintelligence matters are highly classified."

Inman did say, however, that overall, the intelligence rebuilding effort of the Reagan Administration was "off in a good direction. If I was not comfortable about that, I would not have walked away." He indicated also that it would not be easy for the present direction to be changed.

"We believe he's telling the truth about why he's leaving," a House source said. "We take at face value what he said and discount the rumors."

## Inman Praised by Lawmakers

Rep. Edward P. Boland (D-Mass.), chairman of the House Permanent Intelligence Committee, and its members share this view, the source said.

Boland, in a highly laudatory statement issued after the White House announced Inman's resignation Wednesday, called Inman "the nation's finest professional intelligence officer." Virtually all congressmen who have commented have been similarly complimentary.

The silence of Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has been striking. Goldwater was Inman's outspoken champion in Congress and clearly would have preferred Inman to Casey as CIA chief.

"One explanation is that Goldwater is disappointed that Inman is leaving now—disappointed mostly in the Administration for not offering Inman the prospect of Casey's job in the future—and might sound angry if he spoke out now," a Senate source said.

Goldwater was out of town and could not be reached.

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), another Senate Intelligence Committee member, praised Inman highly in a statement Wednesday. "I will miss him and I wish him the very best in his future endeavors," Inouye said. He could not be reached Thursday for comment on reports that Inman had quit in a policy dispute.

Some of Inman's difficulties in the CIA job have surfaced from time to time.

One recurrent theme was that he did not see eye-to-eye on many issues with Casey. In this connection, Inman has said that his relations with Casey were "cordial" and that no two officials ever have identical views on every issue.

Casey focused mainly on rebuilding the nation's covert action capability. Inman became the CIA's chief spokesman on Capitol Hill and largely ran the broader intelligence community, which includes the other U.S. intelligence agencies.

This sometimes required him to defend in Congress CIA policy with which he did not fully agree, sources said.

Inman was cast as a possible successor to Casey when the CIA chief ran into trouble with Congress over some earlier financial dealings and over his choice of Max Hugel, who had almost no professional experience, as a principal CIA officer.

Inman has run afoul of Israel and some of its supporters in the United States.